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Members of the RCMP return from a boat patrol of a flooded neighbourhood in High River, Alta. in July 2013.
THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

HIGHER RISK

Climate change hurts housing affordability in our already crazy market metroNEWS

YOUR MONDAY COMMUTE

TransLink prepares for biggest service change since Millennium Line
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Man smuggling six lizards in hoodie busted at border
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STREAMING COULD SAVE MUSIC: VANCOUVER MUSICIANS SOUND OFF
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metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

Canadian beauty queen Anastasia Lin reportedly can't speak her mind at Miss World pageant. **World**

Streaming sales a saving grace

MUSICIANS

Music revenue rebounded due to services like Spotify

Stuart Neatby
For Metro | Vancouver

Zachary Gray, the singer and guitarist of the Vancouver-based indie-pop band the Zolas, said that earning revenue from album sales remains daunting. CONTRIBUTED

The year 2016 may be remembered as the year streaming services like Spotify and Apple Music stopped the hemorrhaging of music sales revenue.

According to the Recording Industry Association of America, the first half of 2016 saw music revenue from streaming services overtake paid digital downloads by a wide margin for the first time. Canadian data saw similar trends; total aggregate streams of music in Canada, including from ad-supported sites like YouTube and subscription services like Spotify, grew to 34 billion from 26 billion in 2015.

During the same period, overall sales of digital and physical albums were down 21 per cent from $24 million in 2015 to $19 million in 2016 year-to-date, according to Paul Shaver of Nielson Music Canada, which tracks consumer behaviour.

"It's definitely growing for all involved for sure, as we see the increases going up year-over-year, it has to be increasing for everybody," said Shaver.

"There's still a value gap, unfortunately, from the traditional model of a physical CD that you hold or something you download."

This growth in streaming services is largely being credited for the last two years of music revenue growth in the U.S. and Canada following a dismal year in music sales all around in 2014.

But the change to streaming service revenue has not been without controversy. Some artists have decried the low royalty rates paid to artists. The rates they are paid are often determined by music labels, which have their own contracts with streaming services.

> **I think we'll look back at this era as a lost decade.**
> Zachary Gray

Others have actively criticized the entrance of ad-supported services like YouTube into the subscription services market. Music Canada, which represents record labels, has criticized YouTube in particular for "not paying normal music licensing rates due to the misapplication of a legislative framework called 'safe harbours.'"

But some local artists see the growth in streaming music as a largely positive development.

For Nat Jay, a Vancouver-based singer-songwriter, album sales revenues have remained largely unchanged with the rise of streaming services.

"I think that it's helpful actually for a lot of musicians. For a while, people weren't buying music at all. They were just illegally downloading."

Zachary Gray, the singer and guitarist of the Vancouver-based indie-pop band the Zolas, whose third album Swooner was released in March, said that earning revenue from album sales remains daunting.

"I think we'll look back at this era as a lost decade," he said, referring to the challenges of making a living as a recording artist.

But, as a music fan, Gray can't deny the appeal of having ready access to millions of tracks on his smartphone.

"Even though this is an ugly time to be a musician, it's also the most exciting time," he said.

Homeowners at risk, report says

CLIMATE CHANGE

Rising sea levels could drive up cost of housing

Wanyee Li
Metro | Vancouver

Climate change could make local housing more expensive, according to a SFU report.

Concerns about rising sea levels and flood projections are already having a negative effect on property developers who are unsure whether certain plots of land are safe to buy, said Deborah Harford, a professor at SFU's School of Resource and Environmental Management.

She co-authored the Adaptation to Climate Change Team report, which sought input from working professionals on how climate change is affecting their industry.

One major consequence of climate change is a rise in sea levels, which is projected to increase by one metre by the year 2100, according to the B.C. government.

That translates to greater risk for developers who then download that cost to people who buy the condo units, said Harford.

"When there is higher risk, they are going to try and make their return higher and therefore it reduces affordability for the buyer in the end," she said.

Current homeowners are also at risk with about 73,000 properties in Vancouver alone in flood zones, and projections for higher sea levels will likely cover even more homes, she said.

Sandbags line Kitsilano Beach in November 2015 to protect the park from storm surges and king tide events. EMILY JACKSON/METRO FILE

> **There's a disjoint between public awareness thinking this is not really an issue ... and developers.**
> Deborah Harford

There is still uncertainty over which areas of Metro Vancouver are prone to flooding because not enough research was funded in the past, she explained.

"We are very behind on that, in terms of producing flood plain maps that incorporate the projections on what may change due to climate change."

But professionals in various industries are already trying to cope with the realities of climate change while the public continues to have a lukewarm reaction to the issue, said Harford.

"There's a disjoint between public awareness thinking this is not really an issue, we'll think about this in the future, and developers asking is it safe to buy here, realtors asking what should we be selling, engineers asking, where should we build, insurers asking, what role do we play?"

Authorities also need more information to create storm management plans, water storage plans in case of drought, and other problems that will increase in intensity due to climate change, she said. Many of those projects fall under municipal jurisdiction.

The City of Vancouver is currently working on flood protection policies, which could include anything from barriers like dykes and sea gates to adaptive measures like changing building codes or even retreating from low-laying areas altogether.

But provincial and federal governments need to play a larger role in the preparation for climate change and there is a lot of catching up to do, said Harford.

"We had a government that refused to talk about it for 10 years. We didn't have any federal leadership. We do now, but they're still trying to dig out of that hole."

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Would-be lizard smuggler fined

A man has been fined $6,000 for trying to smuggle six baby lizards into Canada at the Abbotsford-Huntingdon border crossing, according to Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA).

Gregory Anderson hid the reptiles — six infant Uromastyx Ornate lizards — in his hoodie pocket while crossing the border on Oct. 27, 2015, but CBSA officers discovered them during a secondary search.

The lizards are protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

Anderson pleaded guilty to one count of making false statements and one count of importing an animal without a permit, according to a CBSA written release.

"Our border services officers work diligently to intercept the illegal importation of restricted and prohibited goods including endangered species.

"This seizure also highlights the important partnership between the CBSA and Environment and Climate Change Canada in protecting our ecosystems," said Harald Wuigk, assistant director with the Criminal Investigations Section, CBSA Pacific Region.

Of the $6,000 fine, $5,000 will go toward the Environmental Damages Fund, which uses money collected from fines to fund various environmental initiatives.

"We work with the CBSA to further Canada's conservation goals by detecting and prosecuting the illegal movement of wildlife at our borders," said John Wong, regional director of the Wildlife Enforcement Directorate for the ECCC Pacific and Yukon Region. WANYEE LI/METRO

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TAXES

Health-care premium hike to impact 1M

Jen St. Denis
Metro | Vancouver

MSP premiums are set to rise for many British Columbians starting January 2017, and the Opposition NDP are using the looming deadline as a chance to once again call for the elimination of the separate premium.

In a press release, BC NDP Leader John Horgan called the tax unfair to the middle class. The way the system is currently set up, someone making $43,000 a year would pay the same $75 monthly premium as a person who makes $250,000 a year.

B.C.'s Green Party also opposes the unique way B.C. collects money to pay for health care: it's the only province in Canada to levy a standalone fee rather than recoup the money through the income tax system.

But the Liberals have so far stood firm on the standalone premium because of its education aspect: "It's a stark reminder to people that this is a cost we incur as a society and is in the realm of our provincial budget," Mike de Jong said during the budget presentation last February.

The Liberals have increased MSP premiums for several years, but in the last budget introduced a reduction for families with children and increased a low income cutoff so more people would qualify for premium assistance.

The province says the latest changes it has implemented means that two million British Columbians will pay no premiums, while 1,060,000 will pay 10 per cent more.

But the NDP is calling on the government to stop "tinkering" with the MSP premium and eliminate it altogether. Horgan claimed the increase will particularly affect seniors and young couples.

Students at UBC's Point Grey Campus. EMILY JACKSON/METRO FILE

Hard filling skilled jobs

ECONOMY

Study predicts not enough workers for near future

Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Vancouver

The demand for skilled labour over the next decade in British Columbia is going to outpace the province's ability to churn out qualified workers, according to a new report.

The Conference Board of Canada released its latest report, PSE skills for a prosperous British Columbia, this week, forecasting that as many as 935,000 jobs will open up between 2014 and 2024 due to current workers retiring and the creation of new jobs.

The report — which interviewed 300 employers — forecasts B.C.'s education system to produce only 421,000 future workers in that time, leaving a potential shortfall of 514,000 skilled workers.

And at the same time, the vast majority of those new workers will have to be more educated than their predecessors.

The report concludes the "skills deficits will cost the province upwards of $7.9 billion in foregone GP and over $1.8 billion in lost tax receipts."

The Research Universities' Council of British Columbia and B.C. Colleges is using the report as a call to action to support post-secondary education.

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More buses for the Tri-Cities

TRANSLINK

Evergreen line brings second biggest service change ever

Stu Neatby
For Metro | Vancouver

Bus commuters in the Tri-Cities will see significant changes in their bus routes starting Monday, as TransLink rolls out 16 new bus routes in the area.

The new routes will replace 11 existing routes in the Tri-Cities, and represents the last phase of TransLink's streamlining of transit service with the new Evergreen SkyTrain line.

"This final phase that starts next Monday, Dec. 19, is pretty much the most complicated," said TransLink CEO Kevin Desmond at a press conference Wednesday morning.

TransLink has embarked on a commuter education effort, and has deployed 125 staff volunteers to speak to commuters about the route changes in recent weeks.

Desmond encouraged riders to plan their routes ahead of time by using the trip planner at the Translink website.

Riders can enter Dec. 19 as the departure date to see the new routes.

In total, 22 bus routes will change, the biggest overall service change since the Millennium Line opened in 2002. The total service hours, however, will remain the same. Burke Mountain and the Dominion Triangle in Port Coquitlam will see bus service for the first time.

"We're adding a lot of service to these communities with the addition of the Evergreen extension, and then reallocating the bus resources within the area. It's a really big add to service," said Desmond.

> **We're adding a lot of service to these communities with the addition of the Evergreen extension.**
> Kevin Desmond

The Evergreen Line SkyTrain. STU NEATBY/FOR METRO

Although most route changes are located in the Tri-Cities, several downtown routes will see changes as well.

These include:

- The C21 and C23 routes in the West End will be combined into a new 23 route which will run through Yaletown and Davie village along Beach Avenue.
- The 135 B-line from downtown to SFU will be replaced by a new 95 B-line.
- The 160 route will now begin at the Kootenay bus loop on Hastings Street instead of Burrard Station.
- The West Coast Express Trainbus will be discontinued as of Dec. 30. Commuters travelling from downtown to Mission or Maple Ridge can take the SkyTrain to the Coquitlam Central Station, then transfer to the 701 bus, whose route will be extended to Mission.

In the Tri-Cities area, several routes will see changes, including:

- The 97 B-line from Lougheed to Coquitlam Station will be discontinued, as its route mirrors the Evergreen Line.
- Eleven routes serving the Tri-Cities will be discontinued (C24, C25, C26, C27, C28, C29, C30, C36, C37, C38, C40) with 16 similar routes as their replacements
- From Burquitlam Station, the 143 will run to SFU in a loop
- Como Lake Drive will be served by the 151 bus running from Burquitlam to Coquitlam station
- The 153 route will be extended from Poirier Community Centre to Coquitlam Station through Mariner Way
- The 191 route will serve Burke Mountain via Pinetree Way and David Ave.

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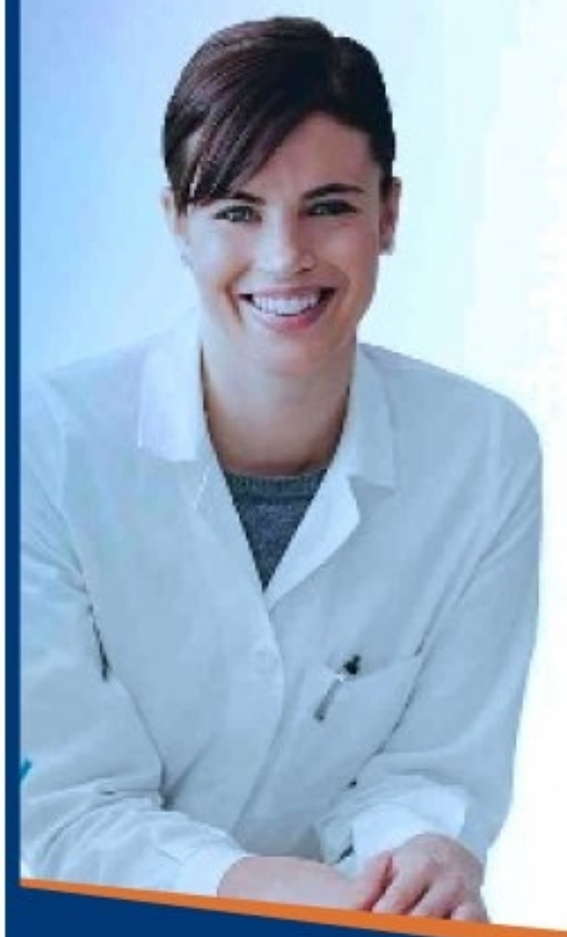

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Feds scrap first-come, first-serve visa process

REUNIFICATION

Spots allotted by random lottery after red flags raised

Coveted spots for the parent and grandparent visa program will be awarded by lottery in 2017 after the federal Liberals scrapped the old first-come, first-serve system that had raised concerns over people paying to be at the front of that line.

Applications for the over-subscribed program had been accepted only via courier or mail at a single immigration office, and since they were processed in the order received, couriers had been doing brisk business promising to be at the front of the line, in exchange for fees that could be as high as $400.

But that system has now been replaced by a random draw, the federal immigration minister announced Wednesday.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Minister John McCallum in the House of Commons. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

"We're ensuring everyone can access the application process by giving them the same chance to have their name chosen," Immigration Minister John McCallum said in a statement.

Beginning Jan. 3, Canadians will have 30 days to fill out an online form indicating their desire to sponsor a parent or grandparent. Immigration officials will then randomly draw 10,000 individuals who will then be given 90 days to submit the application.

The change comes after The Canadian Press reported that the previous first-come, first-serve process was seeing couriers charge more than $400 to guarantee applications would be at the top of the pile.

That raised concerns that the visas were going to those who could afford to pay the high fees or camp out for hours at the immigration office.

High demand came in part from the fact the previous Conservative government closed the program entirely between 2011 and 2014 to bring down a massive backlog. It re-opened in 2014 with a annual cap of 5,000 applications. Last year, 14,000 applications were received and the Liberals later raised the cap on the number of applications they would accept to 10,000.

Couriers had already started taking reservations to deliver 2017 applications, with fees ranging from $60 to $200, depending on whether someone wanted to guarantee their application was delivered first.

One company, Metro Mississauga, said it had about 150 reservations already and was now in the process of refunding all fees.

Company owner Chris Colaco said while he understood why the government was making the change, he wondered why it couldn't have been announced earlier. His business doesn't depend on delivering the applications, but Canadians do depend on the program, he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Winnipeg councillor sorry for comments

Stephanie Taylor
Metro | Winnipeg

A Winnipeg city councillor has apologized for saying that training city workers on the legacy of the country's residential school system would take them away from doing their jobs, like filling potholes or cutting the grass.

During a meeting, Coun. Jeff Browaty said he supports Mayor Brian Bowman's commitment to reconciliation, but said he draws the line at spending extra money.

"Taking away or paying employees overtime to attend this type of training, taking them away from cutting the grass, filling potholes, providing the services we count on, I don't think that is our position," Browaty said.

He later issued a statement apologizing and clarifying: "I apologize if my comments offended anyone. I simply don't see this as the city's role."

EDMONTON

An Edmonton city planner says the city won't "white wash" proposed indigenous street names, even if some residents have a hard time pronouncing them. METRO

ONTARIO

Investigation into devastating fire

Ontario Provincial Police said late Wednesday the residents of a home engulfed in flames on a Southern Ontario First Nation remained unaccounted for.

Emergency crews were called to the home on the Oneida Nation of the Thames at about 11 a.m. Wednesday.

Police did not indicate by press time how many people were unaccounted for, nor did they release any information on their ages or genders. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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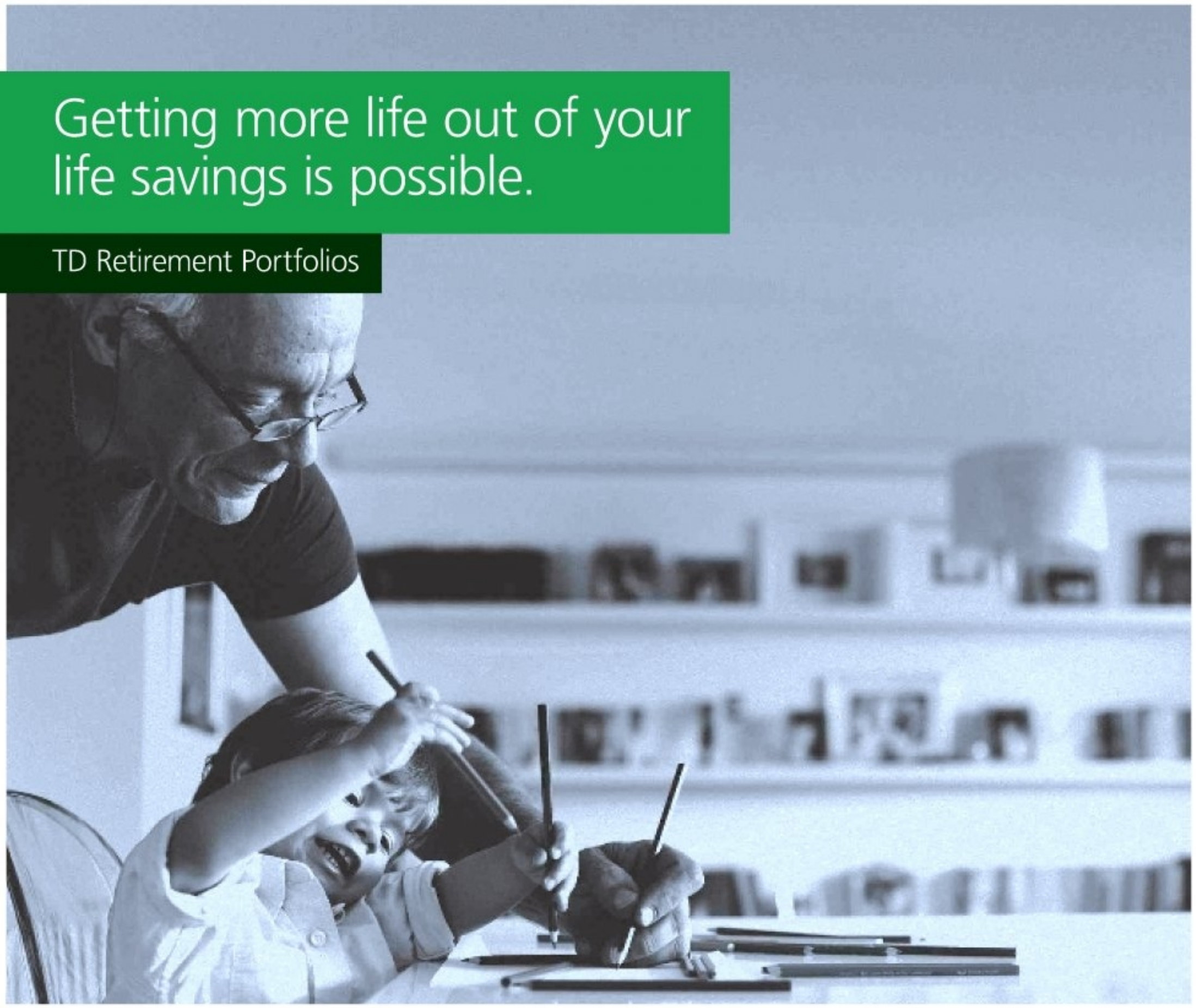

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Residents feel 'duped' by renewed fighting

SYRIA

Aleppo ceasefire unravels as fighting starts once again

A ceasefire to evacuate rebel fighters and civilians from the remaining opposition-held neighbourhoods of Aleppo unraveled on Wednesday, once again raising the spectre of a bloody end to the battle for Syria's largest city as residents reported the resumption of shelling and brutal bombing runs.

Opponents of President Bashar Assad accused the government and its allies of scuttling the deal by adding new conditions.

However, hours after it crumbled, the rebels said the deal was back on. Three rebel spokesmen said the first group of wounded people and civilians were to be escorted out of the city early Thursday morning. Rebels would follow, they said, adding that the conditions had not changed.

The evacuation was to have begun at dawn Wednesday, but quickly derailed, descending into violence. Residents said government buses arrived in the pre-dawn hours at agreed upon meeting points, where the wounded were first in line to be evacuated. But they were turned away by pro-government militias. Then violence erupted: shelling and then airstrikes. The rebels retaliated, at one point shelling the pro-government villages of Foua and Kfraya in Idlib and detonating a car bomb in a frontline area.

Mohammed Abu Jaafar, head of forensics in eastern Aleppo, said residents felt "duped."

"People have left their shelters .... to be ready for the evacuation. I can't describe it," Abu Jaafar said. "Since the morning, they started to target the areas where people have gathered." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Smoke is seen billowing in the background on Wednesday in a rebel-held neighbourhood of Aleppo. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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Beauty queen muzzled at Miss World: Reports

Canadian beauty queen Anastasia Lin is allowed to smile and look pretty at the Miss World pageant in Washington, but she's reportedly barred from opening her mouth and speaking her mind about human-rights abuses in China.

Pageant officials wouldn't connect Torstar with Lin, 26, on Wednesday. Lin was blocked from attending last year's Miss World pageant in China after her criticism of Chinese human-rights abuses against Falun Gong practitioners.

American news reports say that she's not allowed to speak with the media this time around.

And the hosts of a film in which she stars say she has been blocked from attending its Washington premiere. The film sharply criticizes Chinese human rights practices and is being presented by the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

American news reports say Anastasia Lin is not allowed to speak with the media this time around. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

GREENWICH, N.Y.

Boy buried in snow dies, friend survives

Police say a 13-year-old New York boy who was playing in a snow mound with a friend has died after they were buried in snow dumped by a public-works crew.

Greenwich-Cambridge Police Chief George Bell says the boys were playing in a large snow mound created by the Department of Public Works crews clearing streets Tuesday. Bell says the boys had burrowed into the back of the mound when a truck dumped more snow, burying both boys.

Bell says a K-9 found one boy's sled after they were reported missing around 5 p.m.

Workers and police frantically used shovels and their hands to free the boys. Joshua Demarest was unresponsive. He was rushed to Saratoga Hospital, where he was pronounced dead shortly after 10 p.m. The second boy, 12, was found about an hour later. He was recovering at home. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Newspaper won't stand by Santa story

The Associated Press published a story, relying on information from the Knoxville News-Sentinel, about a man portraying Santa Claus who says a terminally ill boy died in his arms.

The paper now says that it cannot verify the man's story and no longer stands by it.

The story, published in the News-Sentinel on Sunday was about Eric Schmitt-Matzen, who said he had promised to protect the identities of the child's family. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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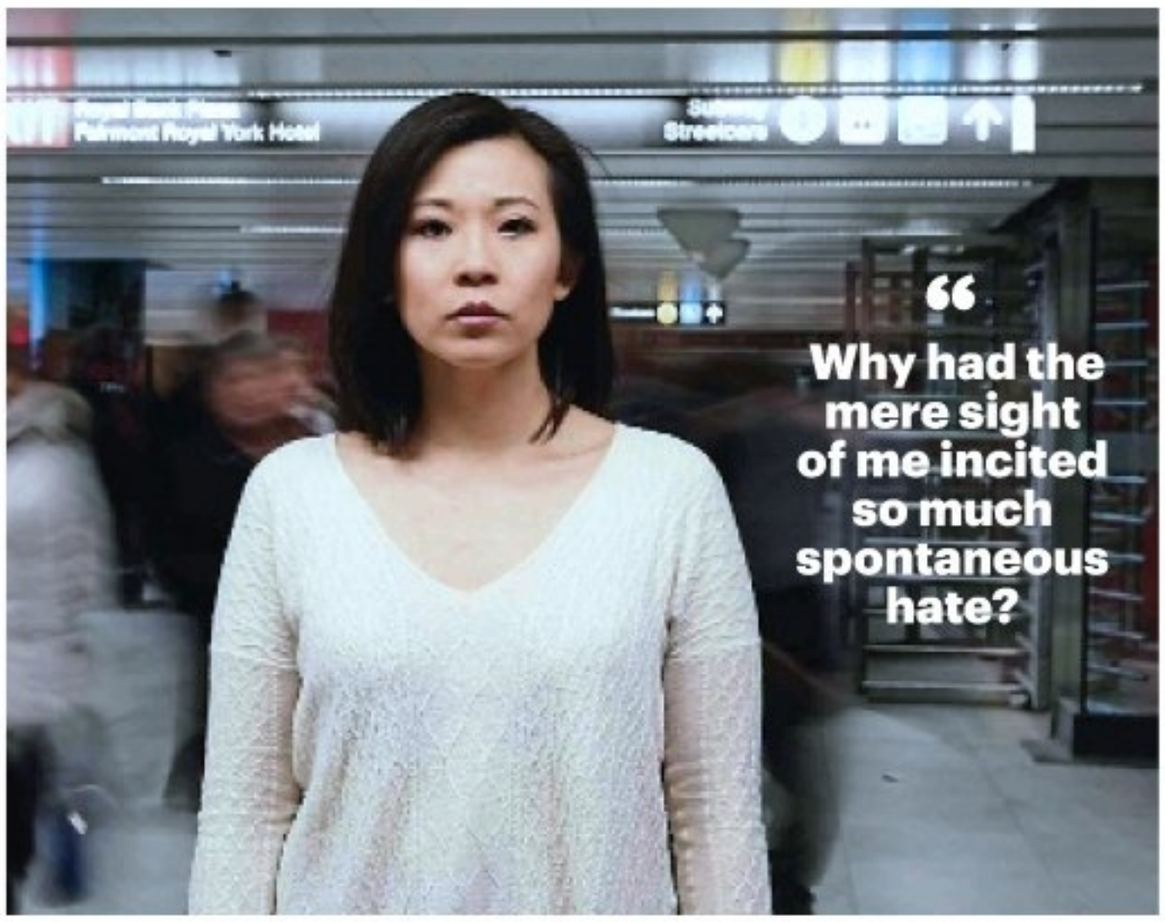
metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Thursday, December 15, 2016

REFLECTION

Ending hate is on all of us

On Wednesday morning, Metro staffer Irene Kuan was the target of a racist remark hurled by a fellow transit rider. She has spent her whole life living and working in Toronto, and this was a first.

Irene Kuan
Metro | Toronto



Irene Kuan, Metro's managing editor, digital, stands on a Toronto subway platform.
LANCE MCMILLAN/FOR METRO

"Go back to Hong Kong," a raspy voice of a man shouted at me, as I was about to exit the subway Wednesday morning.

It was so out of nowhere that the words didn't even register with me until about five minutes later, when I was outside Union Station in downtown Toronto.

The first thing I actually thought about upon stepping out into the elements was the extreme cold weather alert that had been issued for the city that morning. But then it dawned on me: I'd been the target of a random verbal racist attack.

Working as I do in the news industry, I've been aware of the recent surge in public acts of racism, both in this country and in the United States — pro-"white people" posters on lightposts, spray-painted swastikas, verbal assaults of hijab-wearing women. But, as a Canadian-born Chinese journalist, I'd never really thought about it happening to me.

And then it did. A random person told me to go back to a place I'm not even from. And, at some point in the aftermath, it occurred to me that, no, this actually had happened to me before.

This past summer I was driving down an empty dirt road with my boyfriend in a ghost town called Vroomanton, northwest of Sunderland, Ont., when we suddenly saw a random flash of a middle finger from a Caucasian couple speeding by us on a motorcycle. Then, too, I had a delayed reaction. I realize now that in the moment I was more concerned about being presumptuous, about the possibility of taking offence to a gesture that, perhaps, was not as it had seemed. Others have since told me they'd be outraged if had been in my shoes.

Now, hours after the latest incident, when I think back to the words that man said to me, I really don't know how to react. I'm not angry or upset, just surprised that it happened. Because it's 2016.

Both times, I found myself asking why I had been targeted. I was just going about my own business. I didn't do anything to provoke anybody. Why had the mere sight of me incited in perfect strangers so much spontaneous hate that they felt compelled to act out so randomly and viciously?

I know there's no logical answer; it's a senseless act. What, beyond acknowledging that an awful thing has happened, can I really say or do?

These experiences have led me think of the story of Stephanie Kim, a Toronto woman who was subjected to racial slurs standing in line at a TD bank back in November of this year. In recalling the event to the Toronto Star, Kim said that not even the bank staff, let alone her fellow patrons, came to her defence as a man standing behind her in line called her a "chink." (By the way, Kim is Korean, not Chinese.)

Kim said that, more than the insults themselves; the staff's passive attitude when she complained about the man is what made her feel like a second-class citizen.

It's easy to see that the proliferation of these incidents is the natural by-product of the current political climate, in which some have been led to believe that phrases like "Make America Great Again" and "Canadian Values" are open invitations to promote, and directly express, bigotry and racism.

It's disappointing enough that there are people out there who, having apparently confused their resentment-fuelled desire to spew hate speech with their constitutional right to free speech, act out like this in public.

But even worse is that, collectively, we seem not yet to have realized how dangerous it is to stand by and accept hateful vitriol directed at others. In this way, our society normalizes hatred and resentment. And that's not any one individual's problem.

Neither the victim nor the perpetrator of racist violence, verbal or otherwise, should be expected to assume full responsibility for what all of us should be calling by its true name — hate — and fighting against whenever, wherever and however it appears.

Metro ain't having it

Have you recently seen, heard or been the target of racist outbursts in your community? If so, how did you address it? How do you wish you addressed it? Tell us all about it. Tweet using the hashtag #ainthavingit or email us: **readers@metronews.ca**

VICKY MOCHAMA

Look out, Silicon Valley, Canada Post wants in on the action

A House of Commons committee on Tuesday made recommendations for the future of Canada Post. There are dozens, some of which are things one hopes they're currently doing such as number 38: "Canada Post focus on its core competencies to help Canada meet the challenges of the 21st century."

However, the idea that caught my eye is a suggestion that the company create a "free digital infrastructure," which might mean "providing the basis for a Canadian social network." The committee's actual recommendations don't get into what that looks like or means but I think it's worth exploring.

Canada Post is, for example, ideally suited to run a Canadian version of Tinder. Using a combination of their near-pristine location data, Facebook profiles and types of mail received, Canadians might start hooking up courtesy of the nation's mail delivery service. Imagine the stories. "Kids, I met your grandfather when he swiped right on my profile because he saw that I was a skier who regularly sent express mail."

The marriage rate has been in decline for a while. With a Canada Post dating service (PostDates? Mail and Tail? Just thinking aloud here), we could turn things around for the nation's beleaguered single people.

That may not work for people who are already married unless Canada Post is willing to compete with Ashley Madison.

For Canadians who are already coupled up, Canada Post could run a Snapchat-like service for couples worried whether their Christmas presents will arrive in time. Rather than a tracking number that says that your package has been in Mississauga for far too long, couples can get filtered pictures of their packages as they travel the country. Nothing adds a frisson to marriage like watching a box with a flower crown make its way to your mother-in-law. The excitement is hard to contain.

According to a 2011 piece by the Toronto Star, more than 18,000 wallets end up in Canada Post's Undeliverable Mail Offices. The company tries to reunite them with their owners. Other items, however, are sold off or destroyed after seven months. What if they ran a ChatRoulette-style services for those pieces? Just log in, press a button and you can get seven-months-late invoice from a dentist's office in Lethbridge. Or you could get a hand-stitched quilt from someone's grandmother. Sounds like a lottery with only winners to me.

As the business of mail continues to shift dramatically, it's worth putting every idea on the table. For some, physical mail is a relic of the past but for others, it is still an essential need. A Canada Post with a strong and smart digital presence could marry both worlds.

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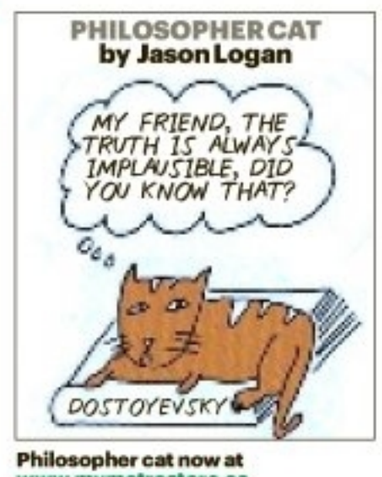

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metro LIFE

Your essential daily news

Cocoa prices fall to three-year low, making chocolate cheaper

Loving Christmas when you're not Christian

Vancouver's Almeera Ismail goes all out for Christmas: she bakes festive cookies, decorates a tree and buys gifts for family. As a Muslim, her love of the holiday grew when she moved to Ottawa as a student, "and you reach for things that make you feel homey or ground you." JENNIFER GAUTHIER/FOR METRO; INSET: COURTESY ALMEERA ISMAIL

CULTURE

Group rituals bind a society together, says religion prof

Megan Haynes
For Metro Canada

Almeera Ismail adores Christmas.

The 30-year-old Vancouver native goes all out: homemade cards, festive cookies, gifts for her nieces, a small tree.

But as a Muslim, Ismail didn't start celebrating until she was in high school when she and her sisters convinced their parents to let them get a Christmas tree. When she went to university in Ottawa, her love of the holiday grew.

"It was when I moved away — and you reach for things that make you feel homey or ground you — that I started to really get into Christmas and the spirit of being around friends and family over the holidays," she says. When her sister entered an inter-faith relationship with a Christian man and the pair had a baby, even Ismail's parents came on board the holiday trend. Now, the whole family celebrates on Christmas Eve, exchanging presents and feasting.

Increasingly, people of all faiths and backgrounds are tuning into Christmas in some form.

A 2011 study by Ottawa-based Abacus, which polled just over 1,000 people, found of the 92 per cent of respondents who said they celebrate the holidays, 52 per cent do not consider themselves Christian.

There are a couple factors at play here, says Christopher Helland, professor of religion in contemporary culture at Dalhousie University. First, as a society, we're becoming more secular: In 2011, Statistics Canada found a quarter of the population said they had no religious affiliation, up from 16 per cent in 2001. Second, we're seeing more people from other faiths arrive in the country: from the last census, 8.8 per cent of the population is of a non-Christian faith, up from 4.8% a decade earlier.

As a result of this shift, society has moved towards a more inclusive season, opting for phrasing like "Happy Holidays," Helland says.

That has offended some people: "Some groups are very upset about that. (They) feel taking the Christ out of Christmas isn't a good thing," he says. However, the shift towards a less religious-filled holiday has made it more acceptable of people of other faiths to participate however they want.

While there are some culturally imposed traditions, such as spending time with family, trees and gift giving, for those of different faith backgrounds wanting to celebrate, it's a great opportunity to build in new rituals without some of the pressures others might face.

"Sometimes the beliefs behind the rituals change, or adapt, take on different meaning. But we certainly like to do the ritual — they are important," Helland says. In fact, allowing the tradition to change and adapt to be more inclusive can help be a bridge in society, he says.

It's not a new idea: an early sociologist, Emile Durkheim, said at the turn of the 20th century that in the absence of a religious tie, in a modernist society these group rituals become the things that bind a society together.

"It's pushed on us pretty heavily that 'This is the holidays, this where you do the gift giving and be with family," says Helland "It's hard to not be part of that if you're part of our society and culture."

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LEGACY

Sporting icons pay tribute to Thicke

Canadian entertainer Alan Thicke — a longtime sports fan with a strong connection to the hockey world — was remembered fondly by the sports community Wednesday.

Thicke, from Kirkland Lake, Ont., died Tuesday at age 69. Hockey legend and longtime friend Wayne Gretzky offered his thoughts in a post on Twitter.

"Janet & I are deeply saddened to hear of Alan's passing. He was a wonderful man, father, husband and friend. He will be missed by all. RIP Alan," Gretzky tweeted.

A photo of the actor with Gretzky, Phil Esposito and Gordie Howe — all wearing all-star uniforms — was posted on the NHL's Twitter feed.

"In addition to being a passionate fan, Alan was an energetic participant in many of our events, including all-star, charity games and awards shows," NHL commissioner Gary Bettman said in a statement. "He frequently attended games, and was with us as recently as September's World Cup.

"Alan always displayed humour and grace and he will be greatly missed. We send condolences to Alan's wife, Tanya, and the rest of his family as well as to his countless friends and the multitudes he entertained."

Thicke told MLB.com last year that he named his youngest son Carter, after former Blue Jays great Joe Carter and former Montreal Expos catcher Gary Carter.

"I was sitting in the bathtub," Thicke said. "We knew that we were having a boy and we were wrestling with a name and what would we do. And then I'm watching a documentary on the sports channel about Canadian baseball heroes ... and sure enough, Joe Carter, for hitting those home runs, and Gary Carter, being a great Expo catcher.

"And I said, 'Eureka!' Out of the tub and we have a name for the kid."

Joe Carter said Thicke shared that story with him when they met at a golf tournament a few years ago in Las Vegas. They became friends and Thicke often participated in Carter's annual charity golf tournament in the Toronto area.

"Our lives are better because of him," Carter said Wednesday from Kansas City. "My life is better because of him. I mean, he put a smile on my face. Those are things that I'll always remember." THE CANADIAN PRESS

CELEBS ON INSTA

Doherty opens up on fight

Shannen Doherty is giving an up-close look at her fight against breast cancer.

The former Beverly Hills, 90210 actress shared an Instagram photo Tuesday of herself in a hospital gown alongside her mother. She wrote that she was undergoing another day of radiation adding, "Today my mom came with me because Even though I'm so tired after, I'm going Christmas shopping!!!" THE ASSOCIATED PRESS;INSTAGRAM/THESHANDO

Manchester storms back with Screen Actors nods

NOMINATIONS

La La Land hits wrong note as Guild opts for Affleck and co.

La La Land may have hit all the right notes for the Golden Globes, but the Screen Actors Guild sung a different tune Wednesday, when Kenneth Lonergan's New England-set family drama Manchester by the Sea picked up the most nominations. Its leading four nods included best ensemble cast, best actor for Casey Affleck and best supporting performances for Michelle Williams and Lucas Hedges.

Barry Jenkins' coming-of-age tale Moonlight and Denzel Washington's August Wilson adaptation Fences followed with three each, including ensemble. They'll be competing with the fact-based NASA crowd-pleaser Hidden Figures and the family drama Captain Fantastic. Shut out of the coveted ensemble award was Damien Chazelle's candy-coloured musical La La Land, which scored nominations only for its leads, Emma Stone and London, Ont.-native Ryan Gosling.

Sophia Bush and Common announced the nominees early Wednesday morning in West Hollywood, California.

In the past, SAG nominees have served as helpful predictors of who will land nominations in the four Oscar acting categories.

While some categories looked generally as expected, like the supporting actress nods for Williams, Fences' Viola Davis, Moonlight's Naomie Harris, Lion's Nicole Kidman and Hidden Figures' Octavia Spencer, others were quite surprising.

In the lead actress category, Annette Bening failed to pick up a nomination for 20th Century Women. Bening had been an assumed lock for an Oscar nomination and had been considered a top contender against front-runners Natalie Portman (Jackie) and Stone (La La Land), both of whom were recognized. Instead, SAG nominated Emily Blunt for the adapted thriller The Girl on the Train, which scored tepid reviews from critics and had not been seen as a major awards contender. Meryl Streep (Florence Foster Jenkins) and Amy Adams (Arrival) were also nominated.

Lead actors nominated were Affleck, Gosling, Andrew Garfield (Hacksaw Ridge), Viggo Mortensen (Captain Fantastic) and Denzel Washington (Fences).

On the supporting side for actors, Moonlight's Mahershala Ali continues to dominate the category with another nomination. He'll be competing against Manchester's Hedges, Jeff Bridges for Hell or High Water, Dev Patel for Lion and Hugh Grant for Florence Foster Jenkins.

Also missing were nominations for Jeff Nichols' fact-based civil rights film Loving and its leads Ruth Negga and Joel Edgerton, as well as for French actress Isabelle Huppert, who has won many of the critics' awards for her performance in the edgy Elle.

On the television side, series newcomers The Crown, Westworld and Stranger Things all picked up three nominations each, alongside Emmys favourite The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story and Game of Thrones. Both Winona Ryder and Millie Bobby Brown will be up against one another in the same acting category for Netflix's Stranger Things.

The 23rd annual Screen Actors Guild Awards take place Jan. 29 from the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Michelle Williams was nominated for best supporting actress for Manchester By the Sea while Moonlight's Mahershala Ali also made the cut for supporting actor. HANDOUTS

She had 'brains, beauty and breeches'

INTERVIEW

Canada's Aloha Wanderwell was first woman to drive the globe

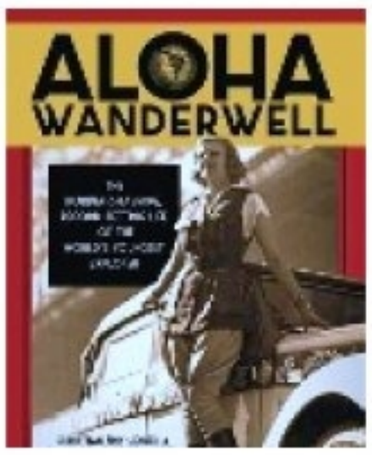
Sue Carter
For Metro Canada

With her blond ringlets, Kewpie-doll lips and statuesque height, Aloha Wanderwell could be a Hollywood invention, leaning against a Ford Model-T, all sass and swagger. But what her 1920s publicity photo doesn't reveal — and what has, for the most part, been buried in history — is that at the age of 16, Wanderwell embarked on an adventure that, among her many records, would make her the first woman to drive around the world, covering 380,000 miles and 80 countries before the age of 30.

Back in 1998, Vancouver television producer Randolph Eustace-Wallace, co-author of the book Aloha Wanderwell: The Border-Smashing, Record-Setting Life of the World's Youngest Explorer, was using the brand-new Google search engine to research his own adventure when he stumbled onto her story.

Eustace-Wallace was looking for information on driving around the world when his cousin called from Ontario needing help with travel plans to Hawaii. He entered "Aloha Airlines" into Google, which mixed with his online search for driving, and up popped a story about Wanderwell. Intrigued, he saved the link, but it wasn't until a couple years later, when he partnered with journalist Christian Fink-Jensen, his co-author on Aloha Wanderwell, did their decade of detective work begin in earnest.

At this point, the duo didn't know that Wanderwell was originally named Idris Hall, born in Winnipeg in 1906, or that her husband had been jailed as a German spy (and later murdered). None of that is mentioned in her 1939 ghostwritten autobiography, Call To Adventure.



"The ghostwriter tarted it up, and added a lot of fiction, made it more melodramatic," says Eustace-Wallace. "When we first read it, we thought, 'It's too bad she's such a terrible writer,' but as it turns out, she was incredible."

Wanderwell's story is so incredible it doesn't require embellishment. In 1922, while the bored teenager was attending school, she answered an ad looking for women with "Brains, Beauty & Breeches" to accompany Captain Ralph Wanderwell — whom she would eventually marry — as a driver and secretary on his international expeditions.

"For 10 years, their escapades were front-page news," says Eustace-Wallace. And yet, he and Fink-Jensen found plenty of conflicting information during their arduous research process, mainly because Wanderwell had reinvented her own personal history. "It's difficult to tell a non-fiction story about someone who tried to keep their life under wraps," he says.

As it turns out, the key to unlocking Aloha's mystery was Wanderwell's children. In order to gain access to films produced by Wanderwell that had been bequeathed to the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian, Eustace-Wallace and Fink-Jensen needed permission from her two offspring. When Valri, who lived in Honolulu at the time, discovered that the two writers were Canadian, she embraced their request. As it turns out, she and her brother Nile, now in their 80s, had been raised on Vancouver Island, and still had fond memories of their early years.

Forgotten Canadian adventurer Aloha Wanderwell. CONTRIBUTED

The writers and children became close. During one trip to Honolulu, Valri appeared with a dusty tin box she had recently discovered that was labelled with her mother's initials. Eustace-Wallace picked the lock and discovered the "Rosetta Stone": Wanderwell's original passport containing every border crossing (many of which were contrary to other reports), her logbooks and a draft of an unpublished memoir. they had all the details needed to shed light on one of Canada's most incredible adventurers. As Eustace-Wallace concludes, "It's the story of someone who was lost to history, and shouldn't be."

Sue Carter is the editor at Quill & Quire magazine.

metro HOME
Your essential daily news
Navy, copper, climbing plants declared top trends on Pinterest 100 list

MEET THE CONDO

Plenty of amenities in Richmond

Project overview

River Park Place III is the next phase in Intracorp's master-planned community in Richmond. Featuring 142 vibrant homes, residents can take part in the neighbourhood, or enjoy the amenities offered.

Housing amenities

River Park Place aims to put the "ultimate games room" under your roof. Residents have access to state-of-the-art recording and practice rooms, business offices, games and study rooms and a yoga practice room and gym space.

Location and transit

River Park Place is right off of Gilbert Road next to the beautiful Fraser River. It's minutes away from Lansdowne Mall as well as the Lansdowne SkyTrain Station. In just 20 minutes residents could be in downtown Vancouver, or head over to YVR and fly out for a vacation.

In the neighbourhood

Situated right next to Richmond's Olympic Oval residents can partake in all the activities offered therein. River Park Place is also steps away from the scenic waterfront trail, perfect for a nice jog or walk. Steveston Farmers' Market and Fisherman's Wharf is a bike ride away.

NEED TO KNOW

What: River Park Place III
Developer: Intracorp
Builder: Intracorp
Designer: Architecture by IBI/HB Architects, Interiors by Insight Design Group, Landscape Architecture by Durante Kreuk
Building: High-rise condos
Location: Richmond
Sizes: 455 to 2,793 sq. ft.
Model: One-, two- and three-bedroom homes
Pricing: $680/square foot
Status: Pre-sales
Occupancy: Fall 2019
Sales centre: 7671 Alderbridge Way
Phone: 604-356-7719
Website: intracorp.ca/rpp3

CORRECTION

Incorrect information appeared in last week's profile on Park Station. The exact square footage is 582 to 1636 sq. ft., the builder has not yet been decided and the sales centre is located at 551 West 57th Ave.

CONTRIBUTED

DESIGN

This is not your father's rec room

When asked to build a luxury home for a house tour this year, designer Kenyon Woods opted to include a rec room — but not the rec room of his childhood.

Unlike old-time rec rooms with their wood paneling, ceiling tiles, box TVs and cast-off furniture, this one measures about 800 square feet on the main floor, with space for watching TV, shooting pool, rock climbing and more.

"Media rooms used to be off by themselves," said Woods, owner of Authentic Custom Homes in Oklahoma City.

"I'm tired of the theatre or game room being separated. Today, families want to be together" even if they're doing different activities.

Recreation rooms of all shapes and sizes are popular in new homes, according to a recent survey by U.S. Houzz and Home, an online source of interior design photos and decor ideas.

Gaming and entertainment spaces, gyms and playrooms were among the top uses for rec rooms, it said.

Clients often want "several different areas in one large, open space," agreed Kristen DuChemin, design director for the Columbus, Ohio, homebuilder Romanelli & Hughes.

For some, that means adding game tables like foosball, shuffleboard, air hockey and billiards.

Chance Pack, spokesman for game manufacturer Valley Dynamo in Richland Hill, Texas, says sales of game tables, which dipped during the recession, have seen an uptick as the home-building industry rebounds.

Parents and grandparents like gaming tables, he said, because they are interactive and intergenerational, luring kids away from electronics and into family activities.

"People are really focused on the entertainment aspect of their home," Pack said.

Minneapolis interior designer Billy Beson also recommends tables with built-in game boards and bean-bag chairs, which are great for TV viewing and can easily be moved when not in use.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Recreation rooms are gaining popularity in new home builds.
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Fit some cheer into your tiny space

HOLIDAYS

Creating focal points key to avoiding clutter

Piling on the holiday decor may be the most obvious way to decorate the home for the season, but for those with limited floor or wall space, too much finery can feel "a bit invasive," says designer Karl Lohnes.

The solution for small spaces, he suggests, is to pay attention to scale and create focal points. Lohnes did just that when dressing the 650-square-foot main floor of his own townhome, a space that incorporates the entrance, kitchen and living and dining rooms.

"Dotting things everywhere makes a smaller space look more cluttered, at Christmas or any time of year. So don't just, for example, pop cards here and there. I put up strings on the wall near my front door and hang cards there to make an impact," says Lohnes.

Designer Jo Alcorn may be thinking about larger-scale holiday décor — she just decorated the Table Rock Welcome Centre for Niagara Falls' Winter Festival of Lights — but she, too, recommends "focused" seasonal décor in small spaces.

Adding some glitter to the table is a simple way to bring a festive feel into your home, even if you don't have a ton of space. COURTESY HOMESENSE

"Tabletop decor is a great solution if you are short on floor space," Alcorn says. "You can use dining, side and coffee tables — all of them can incorporate holiday decor. I love putting a small tree on a table top — it adds interest and romance and works well for families with animals or young children."

For homes that don't have room for a wide-hipped tree, Lohnes likes to go tall and skinny, pointing to a 2.7-metre, pre-lit Dawson Pencil Pine tree from Walmart. Placing the tree on top of a box, which Lohnes wrapped in a faux-fur throw, gives it even more height.

Home Depot also offers a space-saving tree, with one flat side that stands up against a wall.

> **I say bring on the sparkle — along with the peace on earth, please.**
> Cori Halpern

Lohnes owns an antique silver punch bowl that only gets used once or twice a season, so he makes it do double duty this time of year. Framed by gold and silver Christmas crackers, it's topped with inexpensive unbreakable ornaments from Walmart. First, Lohnes filled the bottom of the bowl with newspapers and layered baubles on top.

Lohnes also likes to create a "portable Christmas tray" filled with candles, nuts, potpourri and greenery.

"It can go from being a centrepiece in the dining room to a coffee table to a credenza. It's a way to have holiday in every room without having to decorate them all."

For holiday get-togethers in tight spaces, designer/stylist Janette Ewen — who jet-sets between her L.A.-based design studio Parker Barrow and a small footprint Toronto condo — also likes to marry décor with food and drink.

She makes garden urns stand in as ice buckets, using them to create drink stations.

"It looks great, eliminates servers and keeps guests from backlogging a bar," says Ewen, who will also serve guests glasses of Ruffino Prosecco with fruit-flavoured popsicles dropped in — a fun presentation that does away with the punch bowl.

Designer Cori Halpern keeps holiday décor restrained, yet she does love seasonal shimmer.

In her small Toronto house, she displays her collection of menorahs, placing them — wherever possible — near windows, where passersby can see them. She also piles LED strings into hurricane lamps, and fills glass vases with dreidels or shiny silver and gold-wrapped Hanukkah gelt.

She favours metallic tones — especially coppery golds — for the holidays.

"A lot of people don't have metallics in their home at any other time of year, but they work with any décor — traditional, modern and anything in between. So I say bring on the sparkle — along with the peace on earth, please."

GIFTS

What to get for your favourite gardener

Mark Cullen
Torstar News Service

Making up Christmas gift lists can be a pain. My kids say they have trouble buying for me because I seem to have everything I want — and if I need a new tie, I just go buy one. Perception is their reality: I haven't bought a new tie in years.

I do have a gift suggestion that works great for me, and that I'll share with you: "I don't want you to buy me anything. All I want for Christmas is you."

> **Offer to plant a gardener's garden come spring. Or dig the holes, do some weeding or pruning.**

This is how it has worked for me: I have a son-in-law who is a green architect. He ventured into the field with an eye to making the planet a greener place. "Martin," I said to him, "why not take me on a bicycle tour of 'green' buildings in Toronto. Show me your favourites and explain why they are so special." He did, and we had a wonderful day.

Another son-in-law loves to play golf. "Rene," I said, "how about taking me out for a game of golf and we just enjoy that time together." We did and it was wonderful.

Here are other suggestions for gifts of time:

A trip to a park
Not just any old park but one with flowers and heritage trees. Tour a local community or allotment garden, in season. The Leslie Street Spit provides the perfect place for nosy gardeners like me to poke around and pick up all kinds of wonderful ideas for our own gardens.

One-on-one gardening
Offer to plant a gardener's garden come spring. Or dig the holes, do some weeding or pruning, or fertilize the lawn. You get the idea. YOU are the gift: your time, talent and energy.

Bee hotel
This idea is taking off across the country, and I take full credit for it. Take just about any old stuff you have around the garage and build a habitat for beneficial insects and small animals, such as toads, frogs, snakes and salamanders. Remember: the secret to attracting "beneficials" is rot and decay. Most of us have old bricks, sand, flagstone, lumber, firewood, mouldy cardboard or what-have-you lying around somewhere. If you're a gardener, you're also one of the easiest people to buy for. Here are a few other gift ideas:

Less than $20: Garden gloves (good ones). Cheap ones are a waste.

Plus: Stainless-steel garden scoop, hand trowel, short-handled garden fork or cultivator, garden twine and dispenser, clay pots, hummingbird feeder, quality birdseed, bee hotel, lawn sprinklers and handheld hose end nozzles.

Less than $50: A back hoe (my version of the ultimate weeding/planting tool), quality watering can (check out the Haws brand), quality hand pruners and tree loppers, bird feeders, butterfly habitat, terrarium planter kit, balcony planters, window boxes, stainless-steel digging tools and frankly this list could go on and on.

Mark Cullen is an expert gardener, Order of Canada recipient, author and broadcaster. Get his free monthly newsletter at markcullen.com. Look for his new bestseller, The New Canadian Garden, published by Dundurn Press.

LESS THAN $10

Dirt bag
You think I'm kidding? You can buy very good quality soil for less than $10. Look for a brand you trust.

Plus ...
Flexible plant ties, plant ID stakes, spiral tomato stake, lawnmower scraper, box of plant fertilizer, several seed packets (with a seed catalogue, free), Harrowsmith's Almanac or Garden Making (Canadian) magazine.

Hand trowels and gardening forks are always useful. ISTOCK

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metro SPORTS

Bubba Watson might be adding a pink golf ball to go with his pink driver — and a green ball for the Masters

Seahawks set sights on locking up division title

NFL

First-round playoff bye also within Seattle's reach

For all of their wild inconsistency this season, the path is straightforward for the Seattle Seahawks.

Seattle can wrap up its third NFC West title in the past four seasons with a win over the listless Los Angeles Rams on Thursday night.

At this point, the Seahawks clinching the division title is a formality, holding a three-game lead over Arizona with three games remaining.

The Rams can only dream of that kind of success after another lost season that culminated with this week's decision to fire coach Jeff Fisher.

"We realize that there's a lot at stake with every one of these games, as it has always been," Seattle coach Pete Carroll said. "But now you know you have a chance to make some noise in your division."

The more important task for Seattle is trying to regain control of the No. 2 seed in the NFC and a coveted first-round bye in the playoffs.

The Seahawks (8-4-1) are a half-game behind Detroit in the NFC standings, but face a far easier schedule than the Lions over the final three weeks.

While Seattle closes with Los Angeles, Arizona and San Francisco, the Lions finish off the season at the New York Giants, at Dallas and home for Green Bay.

While the immediate focus is taking care of the division, there is a decent chance if Seattle can finish 3-0 it will end up with a bye.

> **We want to get back to playing great football, which is being very efficient and score as much as we can.**
>
> Russell Wilson

"Owning the division has been something for a long time first off, it's the first thing that you get a shot at and we want to focus at what's closest at hand," Carroll said.

"Also, when you win the division, you play a playoff game at home. This is such a decisive advantage, we feel, to play here."

While Seattle is all but assured of a fifth straight playoff appearance, the Rams (4-9) are without direction after the decision to fire Fisher.

The hype that surrounded the Rams' return to Los Angeles has been replaced by apathy after four straight losses and just one win since Oct. 2.

Couple Fisher's firing with the short week and there's no telling how motivated — or indifferent — the Rams will be even with a three-game win streak over the Seahawks.

"The players are just super resilient," interim Los Angeles coach John Fassel said. "I anticipate they'll go out there and put it all on the line for themselves, the team and coach Fisher."

Seattle will be trying to recover from a rarity: a blowout loss. The 38-10 loss to Green Bay last Sunday represented the first loss by 10 or more points in Russell Wilson's career and most lopsided Seattle setback since the 2011 season.

"That's not the norm for us," Wilson said. "We want to get back to playing great football, which is being very efficient and score as much as we can."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mark Barron of the Rams tackles Seahawks running back Thomas Rawls in front of teammate Trumaine Johnson on Sept. 18 in Los Angeles. The Rams won 9-3. JEFF GROSS/GETTY IMAGES

GREEN BAY

Rodgers chooses rehab over practice

As reporters encircled Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers at his locker, linebacker Clay Matthews hurried past and shouted out in jest perhaps the most important question of the week.

"A-Rod, are you playing?" Matthews yelled.

Oh yes, Rodgers plans to play Sunday against the Chicago Bears. He just didn't practise Wednesday to focus on rehabbing his leg injuries, a plan coach Mike McCarthy said will likely stay in place for the quarterback through Thursday.

McCarthy said Rodgers told him not to hold anything back for the game plan against the Bears as Green Bay seeks a fourth consecutive victory as they chase a spot in the playoffs.

"I'm very optimistic by nature. So we can always take things out. It's harder to add things back in," Rodgers said. "So get everything in, and if there's anything we've got to take out on Sunday, we'll do that."

The Packers (7-6) have won three straight heading into a three-game stretch to end the regular season against NFC North foes. Tied with Minnesota for second at two games behind Detroit, Green Bay needs help to return to the playoffs for an eighth straight season.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fabregas states his case to maintain Chelsea's lead

PREMIER LEAGUE ROUNDUP

Spaniard sinks Sunderland as Liverpool move into second

Used sparingly by Chelsea during its long run of victories, Cesc Fabregas is providing significant reminders of his enduring value to the English Premier League leaders. Two weeks ago, it was Fabregas' raking pass to set up Diego Costa's goal that sparked Chelsea's come-from-behind win at Manchester City.

On Wednesday, it was the Spain midfielder's classy goal — a one-two with Willian before a composed finish from the edge of the area — that earned Chelsea a 1-0 win at Sunderland, a 10th straight victory in the league and six-point lead over Liverpool and Arsenal in the Premier League. "In football today, people forget very, very, very quickly who you are, and what you can do," Fabregas said. "Hopefully now I can get a run of games in the team."

Chelsea's Cesc Fabregas, left, celebrates scoring the winner with his teammates Victor Moses, centre, and Pedro against Sunderland at Stadium of Light. LAURENCE GRIFFITHS/GETTY IMAGES

This was Chelsea's third 1-0 win in its last five matches. In its 10 straight wins, Chelsea has only conceded two goals and this latest clean sheet was preserved by a stunning save by Thibaut Courtois off Patrick van Aanholt late in the game. It was a night when all of Chelsea's potential title rivals — Liverpool, Manchester City and Tottenham — won.

Adam Lallana scored two goals and set up another to inspire Liverpool to a 3-0 victory away to Middlesbrough as goalkeeper Simon Mignolet marked his return to the team with a clean sheet. Liverpool climb into joint second place with Arsenal.

City lost midfielder Ilkay Gundogan to a serious knee injury in a 2-0 win at home to Watford that brought mixed emotions for manager Pep Guardiola. Goals by Pablo Zabaleta and David Silva ensured City bounced back from consecutive losses to remain in fourth spot.

Paul Pogba opened the scoring and Zlatan Ibrahimovic scored an 88th-minute winner in a 1-2 away win at Crystal Palace for United, which has collected consecutive victories in the league for the first time since August.

United remain three points behind fifth-place Tottenham. Meanwhile, Christian Eriksen scored twice as Tottenham beat Hull 3-0, and Salomon Rondon scored a hat trick of headers to guide seventh-place West Bromwich Albion to a 3-1 win over struggling Swansea. Mark Noble's penalty earned West Ham a 1-0 win over Burnley.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WEDNESDAY'S RESULTS

- Middlesbrough 0, **Liverpool 3**
- **West Ham 1,** Burnley 0
- Sunderland 0, **Chelsea 1**
- **Man City 2,** Watford 0
- **West Brom 3,** Swansea 1
- Stoke 0, Southampton 0
- Crystal Palace 1, **Manchester United 2**
- **Tottenham 3,** Hull 0

MLS

CFLers mock Seba over pitch remarks

He might have been the 2015 MLS MVP, but according to CFL players, Sebastian Giovinco is a $7-million crybaby. CFLers aren't impressed with the Toronto FC star's suggestions that the natural grass at BMO Field was damaged because the Toronto Argonauts played at the stadium this year.

Italian Giovinco, who came off because of cramps during the MLS Cup Final against the Seattle Sounders last Saturday, blamed the field conditions through an interpreter.

"Giovinco, both my hamstrings would have to cramp off the bone before I took myself out of the championship game. #cutfromdifferentcloth," tweeted Argos defensive back Matt Black. "That's some serious mental weakness . . . dude needs help," chimed in Roughriders wide receiver Rob Bagg. There was some pushback from fans who suggested the Argos might be jealous of the attention TFC has gotten this season.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

NHL

Pens top Bruins to move into 1st place

Bryan Rust flipped a backhander past Tuukka Rask 1:24 into overtime to give the Pittsburgh Penguins a 4-3 victory over the Boston Bruins on Wednesday night.

Racing down the slot, Rust took a swipe at Evgeni Malkin's centring pass and the puck fluttered by Rask to give the Penguins their seventh straight victory. Conor Sheary, Nick Bonino and Justin Schultz also scored for Pittsburgh. Matt Murray stopped 41 of the 44 shots he faced to improve to 10-0-1 in his last 11 home starts.

WEDNESDAY In Pa.

4	3
PENGUINS	BRUINS

Stanley Cup champion Pittsburgh improved to 20-7-3 to take the overall NHL lead with 43 points.

David Pastrnak picked up his 19th goal for the Bruins.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Reed hired as Als' new GM

He's been a player, an assistant coach and a head coach in the CFL. Now Kavis Reed will get to try his hand at being a general manager.

The Montreal Alouettes announced Wednesday that Reed has been hired as their new GM. He replaces Jim Popp, who was fired Nov. 7.

The Alouettes also removed the interim tag from head coach Jacques Chapdelaine's job title.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cubs add Koji to bullpen

The Chicago Cubs made another addition to their bullpen following the departure of Aroldis Chapman, agreeing to a $6-million, one-year contract with reliever Koji Uehara.

Chicago now has the pitchers who got the final out of three of the last four World Series — Mike Montgomery (this year), Wade Davis (2015) and Uehara (2013).

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Auburn pair suspended after marijuana arrests

Auburn starters Bryce Brown and Horace Spencer have been suspended following their arrest on charges of misdemeanour marijuana possession. Tigers coach Bruce Pearl says they will miss at least Thursday night's game with Coastal Carolina.

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Raptors school 76ers in art of 48 minutes

Raptors guard DeMar DeRozan swings from the rim after a dunk on Wednesday in Philadelphia.

CHRIS SZAGOLA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NBA

Toronto duo get it right after sluggish start in Philadelphia

Kyle Lowry and DeMar DeRozan spent an off night in town at Villanova watching the best basketball team in the Philly area dominate in another victory. A night later, Lowry and DeRozan ditched the courtside seats to team up and keep Philadelphia the worst team in the NBA.

DeRozan scored 31 points and Lowry added 20 to help the Toronto Raptors win their fourth straight game, 123-114 over the 76ers on Wednesday night.

WEDNESDAY In Philly

123	114
RAPTORS	76ERS

DeRozan continued to make the 30-point mark a routine part of his game and scored 31 points through the first three quarters. DeRozan posterized Jahlil Okafor with a dunk over the Sixers big man and easily rolled to his second straight 30-point game. He scored 30 points on Monday against Milwaukee and came in averaging a robust 27.9 points per game.

"It's just experience. My work ethic," DeRozan said. "I just try and be better every single year."

He's having his best one yet. Lowry helped blow the game open in his Philadelphia homecoming. Lowry made a three-pointer in the fourth that stretched the lead to 99-80 and earned some applause for the all-star raised in the area.

DeRozan and Lowry helped squash the Sixers' modest two-game winning streak. Long one of the NBA's worst teams, the Sixers haven't won three straight games since they took four in a row from Dec. 29, 2013-Jan. 4, 2014.

Robert Covington led the Sixers with 26 points and Okafor had 17.

The Sixers had won two straight on the road and seemed like they could win a rare game at home when they opened with a strong first 17 minutes. Lowry brought the Sixers crashing back to reality.

Lowry buried two quick three-pointers that brought the Raptors within two and scored on a driving layup that tied the game at 45-all. The Raptors turned a three-point deficit to open the second quarter into a 60-54 halftime lead. The Sixers went on a mini-run late in the fourth and got within five points with 30 seconds left. They could have used another 30 minutes to top the Atlantic Division-leading Raptors.

The Raptors have won 10 of 11 games and are 11 games over .500 for the first time this season.

Lowry dedicated the win to his mother on her birthday.

"I got as many points as her age," he said, laughing.

Lowry and DeRozan attended No. 1 Villanova's game on Tuesday night. Lowry, a Philly native who played at Villanova, wore a "Just a Kid From North Philly" sweatshirt at shootaround. "He's a pain in the butt sometimes, but he's our pain in the butt," Raptors coach Dwane Casey said. Casey said Lowry reminded him of former Seattle great Gary Payton. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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MAKE IT TONIGHT

Spicy Carrot Soup

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Amp up or chill out the spices in this carrot soup depending on how you or your family like it.

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 1 onion chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic minced
- 1/2 inch of fresh ginger minced
- 1 teaspoon chili
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 3 or 4 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 3 cups low sodium vegetable or chicken stock
- juice of half a lemon
- plain yogurt to garnish

Directions

1. Warm a glug or two of olive oil in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat.

2. Saute onions, garlic and ginger for about two minutes. Stir in spices and cook for another minute or so. Add carrots and stir well until they are coated lightly in oil and spice.

3. Add stock and increase the heat until it boils.

4. Reduce and allow to simmer for about 20 minutes or until carrots are quite tender.

5. Puree in small batches until the soup is quite smooth. You may need to add a little water or stock to thin it if it's too thick.

6. Stir in lemon juice.

7. Taste and check seasoning. Serve garnished with yogurt.

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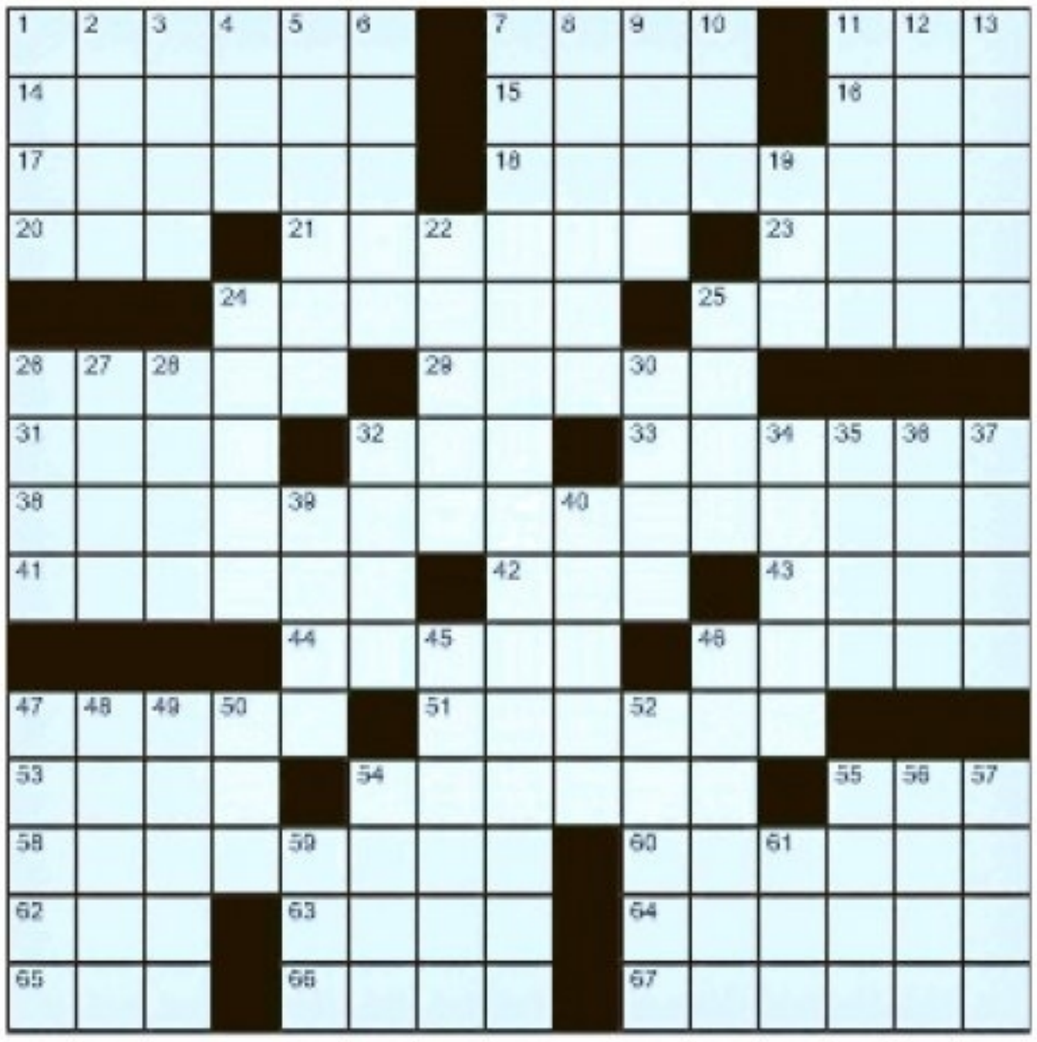
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS

1. Help get the hockey goal
7. Shindig
11. Pop-ups, e.g.
14. Less tight
15. Taxi alternative service
16. Orchestra _
17. Reunion attendees
18. Municipality in Manitoba, Norfolk _
20. Pine-_ (Cleaning brand)
21. Cleric with a wooden bench
23. Lotus position-doing class
24. The Enlightened One
25. Snake's toxin
26. Crouch
29. _ funds
31. Serve the wine
32. Favouring
33. Maple, in Quebec
38. Festive faux firs: 2 wds.
41. Doesn't catch, as a bus perhaps
42. Meshwork
43. Gather the crops
44. Male deers
46. Hoarse
47. The Matthew explorer John
51. 1981: "Being with You" by _ Robinson
53. Declare with certainty
54. Paper clip alternative
55. Sort of deposit
58. 'Crossroads to the Future' village in Alberta northeast of Calgary where Squirt the Skunk is the mascot
60. Practical
62. Work unit
63. Citizen of Ankara or Instanbul
64. Carpentry joint parts
65. Particular loaf
66. Pepsi holders
67. Showbiz legend Ms. Gabor: 2 wds.
24. Mr. Karloff of scary movies
25. Green, in Quebec City
26. Internet junk
27. Ms. Spelling
28. Baseball stats
30. Money, informally
32. Boxer's hand formation
34. Range
35. Hive denizens
36. Jump
37. Catch a glimpse
39. Celebration
40. Ancient Greek creator of fables
45. Sailor's 'backward'
46. Peanut Butter Cups name
47. Tossed pole in Highland games
48. Office labels brand
49. Ecru
50. Alternatives
52. Butterfingers
54. Arctic seabird
55. "The Wizard _ _" (1939)
56. Bits of vocal acrobatics
57. Queen in Disney's "Frozen" (2013)
59. Long list ender
61. Disney animated movie deer

DOWN

1. Sigher's word
2. Unaccompanied
3. Inner light
4. Philosophy
5. Lampoon
6. Gave it a go
7. On animal bone artifacts in archaeology, they indicate that tools were used, such as in the preparation of meat: 2 wds.
8. In a country far away
9. Pictured
10. Letters with Prince Charles' name
11. Cook's covering
12. Wild dog of Australia
13. "_ Heat" by Patti Page
19. Bionic part on Colonel Steve Austin
22. Specific-purpose committee 2 wds.

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
Something unexpected will interrupt your home routine today. Small appliances might break down, or minor breakages could occur. It could be anything! Be a Boy Scout, and be prepared.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Pay attention to everything you say and do to avoid accidents today, because this kind of energy is in the air. But if you are mindful, you will be just fine.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Something having to do with your finances, your possessions or your cash flow will be interrupted. You might lose money or you might find something!

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Today the Moon is in your sign, at odds with Uranus. This makes you independent and rather obsessed with things. Furthermore, everybody is restless and irritable.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Something occurring behind the scenes will have a domino effect and possibly interrupt your life or your plans today. Give yourself extra time so you have the space to deal with this.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You can expect to be surprised by a female acquaintance today. Possibly, you will meet someone who is really different or "out there."

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Relations with female authority figures are challenging today. This includes mom, bosses, judges, nurses and the police. Don't test your luck. Be courteous.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Your travel plans will be interrupted today. You can almost count on this. Double-check all important details, and allow yourself extra traveling time.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Stay in touch with your bank account and anything having to do with inheritances and shared property, because something might adversely affect these areas today. Make sure you know what's happening.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
A close friend or partner might throw you a curveball today. He or she might want more freedom or demand a change. Or she might take you out for dinner.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Expect interruptions at your workplace today. It could be anything: Computer glitches, equipment breakdowns and canceled appointments, as well as staff shortages.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Be extra vigilant today, because this is an accident-prone day for your kids. Keep your eyes peeled. Meanwhile, social plans might change.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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9				5			3	7

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

Your daily crossword and Sudoku answers from the play page.

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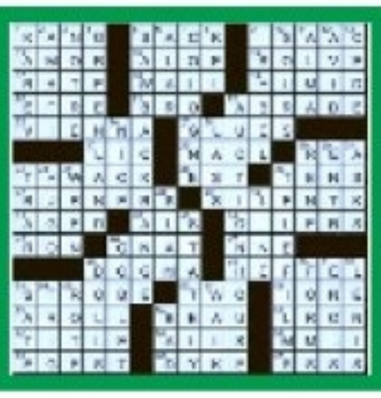

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2	3	5	7	1	6	9	8	4
5	9	6	3	2	4	8	7	1
8	1	2	6	7	9	5	4	3
3	4	7	8	5	1	2	9	6
4	5	1	9	3	7	6	2	8
7	8	3	1	6	2	4	5	9
6	2	9	4	8	5	3	1	7

comwave Bundle

High-Speed Internet & Home Phone

$49.95/MONTH

+ applicable taxes

Monthly 911 fee of $1.45 not included

6 MONTHS FREE HOME PHONE

When you transfer your number to Comwave, on a 3 year term

\+ ADD Unlimited Data for only $10 more![3]

Why Make the Switch?

Comwave offers the following features...

1. Keep your existing phone number[1]
2. Unlimited local calling
3. Voicemail, caller ID, call waiting
4. Download Speed - Up to 6 MBSP
5. Upload Speed - Up to 800 KBPS
6. Data Usage - 75 GB[2]

FREE Installation and Equipment Rental

... over $240 in savings!

HURRY! Offer expires December 31

CALL TODAY!

1-866-516-0231

comwave

Find us on & comwave.net

[1]Service not available everywhere. Monthly local loop Access Fee of $5.95 (if needed) is not included. A one-time activation fee of $59.95 applies. Shipping fees applies. [2]A rate of 25 cents per GB will be charged if usage exceeds the plan's monthly data limit. [3]Unlimited Data Usage is governed by our Fair Usage policy. VoIP 911 has certain limitations. **Details at comwave.net**.